AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the following paragraphs as follows:

[0001] This application is a continuation of U.S. Application No. 10/266,040, filed ~~October7, 2002, which~~ October 7, 2005, now U.S. Patent No. 6,820,669, issued November 23, 2004, which is incorporated herein by reference for all that it discloses.

[0039] As shown in **FIGURE 6**, the wheel **60** includes an integral aesthetic design on its outboard face ~~62~~ 64. The design preferably extends from the central hub **62** into and across at least a portion of the outer flange **66**. The design on the outer flange **72** preferably includes a pattern of surface variations comprising a plurality of at least one of either indentations **76**, protrusions **78**, or slits **80** that are aesthetically consistent with and blend into the design of the central hub **62**. As used herein, the term "slits" encompasses grooves formed on a surface whether or not such grooves pass through the surface. In the illustrated embodiment, the integral design creates the appearance that the spokes formed on the central hub **62** extend into the outer flange **66**, making it more difficult to perceive upon casual inspection where the central hub **62** ends and the outer flange **66** begins. Indeed, the consistency and blending of the designs on the central hub **62** and outer flange **66** make it unlikely that the casual observer of a mounted wheel **60** would notice that the outer flange **66** extends beyond the wheel barrel **70**.

[0049] In the illustrated embodiment, the outer radial location of the wheel protector **102** (i.e., the distance from the inner diameter $\mathbf{d_i}$ of the tire to the diameter $\mathbf{d_p}$ of the wheel protector **102**) is about the same or slightly greater than the 2-1/2-inch-wide outer flange **66** of the wheel **60**. As previously explained, those of skill in the art will appreciate after reading this disclosure that the outer flange **66** may have many other widths, including 1 inch, 1-1/2 inches, 2 inches, or 2-1/2 inches. Thus, the outer radial location of the wheel protector **102** would also have corresponding sizes of about 1 inch, 1-1/2 inches, 2 inches, or 2-1/2 inches to approximately match the size of the outer flange **66**. The region between the inner diameter $\mathbf{d_i}$ of the tire wall **92** and the diameter $\mathbf{d_L}$ of the ledge **108** is the flange seat **109**. The width $\mathbf{W_{fs}}$ of the flange seat **109** is preferably at least about one-quarter of the width of the outboard tire wall **92** (as measured along the tire wall **92** from the inner diameter $\mathbf{d_i}$ to the outer tire diameter $\mathbf{d_t}$ where the tread **98** begins) and can, for example, be at least about 1 inch, 1-1/2 inches, 2 inches, or 2-1/2 inches to generally match the inboard face **74** of the outboard flange, as explained below.

As illustrated and described above, the outer radial location of the wheel protector **102** can be slightly greater than the width of the outer flange 66 because the distance from the inner diameter d_i of the tire to the diameter d_p of the wheel protector **102** includes the width W_{fs} of the flange seat **109** plus the width of the wheel protector **102** (i.e., the radial distance between d_i and d_p). More preferably, the width W_{fs} of the flange seat **108** is at least about one-third, and most preferably at least about one-half, of the width of the outboard tire wall **92**. Many other sizes within and beyond these ranges and examples are encompassed by the present invention. If the flange seat **109** and outer flange **66** do not extend radially far enough, the desired simulation is less effective. If they extend too far, the vehicle to which the mounted wheel is attached would undesirably appear to be riding on its wheels with little or no tire visible.